

Dear Members of the Housing Committee,

CT is one of the wealthiest states in the country, also with one of the biggest chasms between rich and poor. We are awash in \$1.4 billion in federal largesse and our state's Rainy Day fund is overflowing at \$3.3 billion. The state budget is projected to have a \$2.3 billion surplus by the end of this fiscal year in June.

Residents deserve a tax cut. But the most vulnerable among us also deserve a dry, warm roof over their heads. Some of that money could and should go to protecting renters at risk of eviction and to help cover the cost of their increasing rents.

I support SB 4 with some changes. I would like to see the cap reset to no more than an annual 2.5% increase, and prohibiting no-cause evictions with exceptions needs to be put back. I think this needs to apply to every year a family is renting, not just the first year. I did some canvassing in a lower income neighborhood of New Haven with DSA, Democratic Socialists of America, where we spoke to people who didn't know how they were going to pay their ever-rising rents.

I also support the bill protecting renters from eviction during the winter.

I'm old enough to remember when many parts of our cities had rents that were affordable. In 1970 we rented a three-bedroom apartment in Chicago for \$100. That's the equivalent of \$771 today, but in perusing rents in Hartford I saw nothing less than \$1,500 for a 3-bedroom in a similar working class neighborhood.

I'm sorry. My testimony disappeared when I prepared to send it this morning, so this is a summary.

I am a climate activist who supports housing justice, for its own sake and also because there are many connections between the two issues. Due to historic redlining, many people of color are forced to live in neighborhoods polluted by fossil fuel burning, which also increases global heating. They live in homes that are not up to code and therefore are ineligible to have energy efficiency upgrades done. Since they for the most part don't own their homes, they have no say in whether they will get renewable energy options like rooftop solar panels.

Our state is awash in billions of dollars of federal largesse, our overflowing Rainy Day Fund, and this year's expected budget surplus. I think taxpayers deserve a refund, but, since CT is one of the wealthiest states in the country and also one of the most unequal economically, we can also afford to provide more help to those who need it and increase equity, especially during this time of high inflation and skyrocketing rents.

I support SB 4, but I support moving the rent cap back down to 2.5% and putting back the protection from no-cause evictions. I did some door-knocking in New Haven on this issue, with Democratic Socialists of America, and met people who didn't know how they were going to make their rent as it keeps rising. Reasonable rents used to be much more available in New Haven, in CT and around the country. When I was growing up, most families had only one wage earner and they could live in dignity. Now so many people are desperate.